

OPEN LETTER FROM JOHAN BRUYNEEL

Madrid, October 24, 2018

This afternoon, I received an email from the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) in Lausanne, announcing that the 10 year ban, imposed by the United States Anti Doping Agency (USADA) in 2012, has been increased and is now a life time ban.

The World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) had appealed against the original 10 year ban and instead demanded I be banned for life. Their request has now been granted by CAS and I am now banned for life from cycling.

Although there's effectively nothing I can do against this life time ban from the Sports authorities - and at 54 years of age, a 10 year ban or a life time ban is practically the same - I would still like to take the opportunity to highlight a few key elements in this long process.

First and foremost, I want to stress that I acknowledge and fully accept that a lot of mistakes have been made in the past. There are a lot of things I wish I could have done differently, and there are certain actions I now deeply regret. The period I lived through, both as a cyclist and as a team director, was very different that what the sport looks like today.

Without going into details in this letter, I would simply like to observe that we were all children of our era, facing the pitfalls and temptations that were part of the culture at the time. We didn't always make the best choices.

In terms of the whole sports-legal process however, and trying to keep this letter as brief as possible, there are elements which I feel the need to highlight, as even today, after all these years, I find them incredibly frustrating.

USADA: I have said from the beginning that this American agency had no jurisdiction over me. I am a Belgian citizen, living in Spain, and I have never had any contractual agreement, let alone an arbitration agreement, with USADA. Yet this agency disregarded all normal judicial limitations to crucify me, making me a key protagonist in their novel story of character assassination.

In spite of the CAS decision, I firmly maintain my position that USADA does not - and never had - any legal authority over me. Thus USADA never had the power to open a case against me far less issue me with a ban of any duration.

I was however coerced into responding to their ban and thus also put into a position where I had to file an appeal to CAS, with the above mentioned result.

In terms of the whole CAS appeal process, my principal defense rights, namely

1. The respect of the statute of limitations
2. The right to receiving equal treatment
3. The proportionality of the sanction

have all been completely disregarded.

This whole process has been a difficult, very painful and complicated learning process for myself, but after a too long time, it is now time for me to move on. I can finally close this chapter and focus on the positive things in my future. I am still in good health, I have two beautiful, healthy children, a lot of very good friends as well as plenty of energy and ideas for the years to come.

After everything that happened, and I repeat, many of things I regret, I still love cycling with the same passion and intensity I had when I fell in love with it as a 14 year old boy. In spite of the CAS decision, it is still my goal and my wish to contribute, to help grow my sport and make it better in the years ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Johan Bruyneel.

